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● COUNCILLORS CLASH OVER £54 MILLION SPENDING CUTS

'Ducking the need for further pain'

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The news of the dramatic reduction in spending comes as the row has escalated over council plans to save money by stopping subsidies of after-school childcare and to transfer the service directly to schools and private providers from April.

The council says the plan has been forced by cuts in Government funding for child services of £12.3 million in the past four years, slashing its budget by a third.

Councillor Elizabeth Campbell, Cabinet Member for Families and Children's Services, has defended the planned changes because 'we are in a prolonged period of austerity...and every area of council business must adapt accordingly.'

But in a letter to this newspaper, Councillor Emma Dent Coad, Leader of the Opposition Labour Group on RBKC, claims that the council can afford not to outsource play services, by dipping into reserves of £283 million.

"What is clear is that Cllr Campbell has no understanding whatever of the relative good fortune enjoyed by RBKC in 'tough times'", claims Cllr Dent Coad.

She says council under-spending over the past four years totals £83.7 million and adds "a large chunk of the under-spends every year are put into the Capital Reserve, to fund major projects", and the "usable Reserves" element was a whacking £283 million in September.

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● By LWN reporter **GEOFF BAKER**

geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk



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But in response to Cllr Dent Coad's letter, Cllr Campbell revealed that the council is to increase by

20 per cent the number of free childcare places for low-income families.

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The council points out that various childcare subsidies are available to working families. Childcare tax credit is available to families that access the tax credit scheme for up to 70 per cent of childcare costs.

Despite the criticisms from the Labour Opposition, Cllr Campbell is sticking to her guns that RBKC has to economise in order to deal with bigger cuts to come in Government funding.

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■ **TURN TO PAGE 3**

Cllr Coad Dent's letter in full on page 4

INSIDE THE ROYAL BOROUGH'S BRIGHT NEW WEEKLY



Boris fireworks gamble pays off

- see page 8

● Borough doctor in court for sub-letting his council home

Full story on page 3

Sir Malcolm joins Credit Union



KENSINGTON MP Sir Malcolm Rifkind has joined the Royal Borough's credit union, YourCU, visiting its Kensington High Street headquarters and opening a saving account with the financial co-operative.

William Rhodes, CEO of YourCU, said: "We are delighted and honoured to welcome Sir Malcolm as a member of YourCU. To be supported by a politician of Sir Malcolm's stature is a huge boost for us and a measure of the growing importance of credit unions."

YourCU allows members to make direct transfers on a regular basis from their bank ac-

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The UK credit union movement is in the midst of a major expansion programme after the government said it would invest up to £38m and has attracted members including the Duchess of Cornwall.

■ PRINCE CHARLES VISITS ROYAL BROMPTON



■ **PRINCE Charles**, as the new Patron of the Cystic Fibrosis Trust, paid a visit to the Royal Brompton Hospital in Chelsea where they have a special cystic fibrosis unit.

Full report and more photos on pages 13-16

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THE relaunch of three newspapers in Central London - and a new title aimed at the tourist market - has caught the attention of the national media scene. Following the closure of a number of newspapers in London and the Home Counties, the move by Capital News & Media Ltd to revive the Westminster & Pimlico News, Kensington News and Chelsea News - as well as the launch of a new title, the London Weekly News - has been welcomed by media pundits. Editor and joint managing director Philip Evans was invited onto Radio 4's "Media Show" to explain how he and joint MD Karen Sheppard managed to launch the four titles in less than four weeks - with no staff and no office.

Mr Evans told media consultant, Steve Hewlett, who fronts the radio show, that they did it by using existing resources in London where parent group Tindle Newspapers already have 28 titles, including the twice weekly paid-for South

London Press - and engaging the services of established freelance journalist Geoff Baker, a former Fleet Street showbiz reporter who started his career under Evans' tuition.

Hewlett told Evans that the papers "did not look like they've been rushed out in a hurry", and the UK's two most respected media pundits, Peter Preston (The Observer) and Roy Greenslade (The Guardian), wrote positively about the new London papers which buck the recent trend of newspaper closures.

London Mayor Boris Johnson, himself a journalist, also welcomed the papers, describing their arrival in the capital as "fantastic".

Mr Evans said: "We are delighted with the response to our new papers and we appreciate the support we have received from our readership which is growing every week."

"Our mix of community news, showbiz gossip and coverage of the Royal family is proving to be very popular."



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CHAIRMAN

Sir Ray Tindle

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Wendy Craig

JOINT MANAGING DIRECTORS

Karen Sheppard

0208 768 4903

Philip Evans (Editor)

07796 951991

Editorial Email:

editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

News Editor Geoff Baker 07864 992274

Sport - Tony MacDonald 07711 160427

Advertising

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WESTMINSTER City Council is committed to helping young people into employment and is very proud of the apprentices on its Apprenticeship Scheme. It has been a huge success with positive feedback from both apprentices and line managers.

Apprenticeships are an excellent way of gaining qualifications, work based skills and experience with all apprentices provided with relevant workplace placements and training from a recognised OFSTED provider.

The council's current apprenticeship programme is delivered in partnership with the London Apprenticeship Company with opportunities at the council advertised on their website.

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APOLLO THEATRE CEILING COLLAPSE:

No prosecution but city chiefs call for greater safety checks

WESTMINSTER City Council chiefs have called for more rigorous guidance governing ceiling checks in historical theatres and cinemas.

Their call to Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Association of British Theatre Technicians (ABTT) comes following the internal collapse of part of the ceiling at the Apollo Theatre in December 2013.

A year-long investigation has concluded that:

- ◆ the collapse happened because of the age of the structure;
- ◆ there has been no breach of the current laws.

As a result, the council has concluded that the theatre company and the ceiling inspection firm should not be prosecuted, because they followed the current guidelines.

Cllr Nickie Aiken, Westminster City Council's cabinet member for premises management and licensing, said: "This has been one of the most thorough investigations of its type, and our main aim now is to ensure that an accident like the one at the Apollo never happens again.

"So, we are calling on the HSE and ABTT to tighten and improve the technical standards on ceiling checks

By LWN reporter

in historical buildings, including theatres and cinemas. Using the lessons we have learnt, we have already started engaging with both of these organisations to begin drafting a new set of rules, rather than guidelines, which we hope they can bring in as soon as possible.

"The accident last year must have been a frightening experience for those people who were involved, and we really appreciate a number of them coming forward during the investigation. We hope that the conclusion of our investigation will bring some closure to the events of that day.

"Simply put, the onus needs to change – experts and owners need to prove that structures are safe, rather than not prove that they are unsafe.

"We have worked with all theatres over the last 12 months and have been encouraged by the way they have proactively engaged with us following the shocking events of last year."

Background

DURING the investigation, the council employed three experts – Richard Ireland, an historic plaster spe-



■ THIS was the scene outside the Apollo Theatre on December 19th last year when the emergency services were called after the ceiling collapsed, injuring 88 people. Photo LUCY YOUNG/REX

cialist; and Jason Howell and Michael Coombs, both of whom are structural engineers employed by Alan Baxter and Associates, to provide specialist opinion. Their findings were key to identifying why the theatre ceiling collapsed and what events led to it, and helped the council issue interim guidance earlier in 2014 allowing the theatres to carry out immediate checks.

Westminster Health and Safety Officers worked for over 900 hours, conducted 25 interviews with theatre staff, ceiling inspectors, audience members, emergency services, actors and witnesses, and carried out checks on maintenance dating back nearly a decade. They also scrutinised the role of ceiling inspectors.

As a result, the council has found theatres being much more proactive in checking balconies, lighting, rigging, loading capacities and ceilings. Since April 2014, Westminster has carried out inspections across all theatres in the city.

Westminster has had a great deal of interest from local authorities in the work that has been done over the last 12 months, including those in Glasgow and Leeds, and is actively engaging with other authorities to share its findings and prevent a similar event elsewhere in the UK.

Facts

On December 19th 2013, at 8.15pm, plaster fell from the roof of the ceiling at the Apollo Theatre during a performance. Eighty-eight people were injured in an audience of approximately 775.

The ceiling of the Apollo dates back to the original construction of the theatre in 1901. The Apollo Theatre is a Grade II listed building.

The Apollo Theatre's ceiling was last inspected in September 2013.

Tattershall Castle pulls up gangplank for refit

LONDON'S famous floating restaurant, bar and comedy venue, the Tattershall Castle, hosted hundreds of people celebrating New Year's Eve last week before pulling up the gangplank and setting sail later in January for a three-month refurbishment in Hull.

The Tattershall Castle has been moored on the Embankment for 40 years and is one of the capital's favourite places to see in the New Year, thanks to its unrivalled views of the London Eye and fireworks display on The Thames, with tickets selling out weeks ago.

On New Year's Eve, revellers enjoyed around 150 bottles of fizz on board and on past form at least one couple got engaged on the deck as nearby Big Ben struck midnight.

The 'Tatts', as it is affectionately known by thousands of the capital's drinkers and diners, will be back in its berth in April 2015, tides permitting, in time for the London Marathon runners to admire its new look and to welcome the many summer visitors who enjoy a drink on its deck.

It will return freshly painted externally, with a maritime feel inside, new pre-bookable 'cabins' downstairs and an improved Club Room for comedy, private parties and, licence permitting, weddings and civil ceremonies.

Tattershall Castle – key facts:

- ◆ 250,000 pints of beer and cider sold every year.

- ◆ 3,500 portions of fish & chips.

- ◆ Built in 1934 as a passenger ferry across the River Humber.

- ◆ In its 39 years, it transported more than one million people.

- ◆ Moved to London in 1975 and opened as the capital's first floating art gallery. In 1982 it was converted to a bar and restaurant.

- ◆ Since 2000, the Tatts has been home to the Boat Show Comedy Club, which has staged performances from some of the country's top comedians, including Micky Flanagan, Eddie Izzard, James Corden, Jack Whitehall, Michael McIntyre and Sarah Millican.

- The Tattershall Castle is set to leave The Embankment in mid-January, initially down The Thames to Gravesend – choosing the lowest tide in order to pass under Tower Bridge – and from there by sea tow to dry dock in Hull. The Tattershall Castle is part of the TCG group of managed pubs, bars and nightclubs. TCG operates 67 sites across the country, including Henry's Café Bars, Eerie Pubs and the King's Feast food concept.



Lack of women in specialist squads, concern to the Met

■ FROM PAGE ONE

The report adds: "The lack of women on some specialist squads remains a concern. The Met should work with women officers currently working in these units to identify and challenge the barriers that prevent more from joining."

The report also urges the Met to launch an investigation aimed at making police life easier for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) officers, following revelations of homophobia among the force.

"The committee also discussed some of the issues that LGBT police officers face. A recent survey carried out by the Police Superintendent's Association of England and Wales found that four out of 10 LGBT senior officers had experienced discrimination in the policing workplace. The survey also found that some senior police officers feel homophobia still exists in police forces and coming out can impact on

career prospects. A Met-commissioned survey would generate a clearer picture of the needs of its LGBT officers, particularly given a recent freedom of information request which found the Met had the third-highest number of officers (69) of police forces in England and Wales being investigated for making racist or homophobic comments on social media."

Joanne McCartney, chair of the London Assembly's Police and Crime Committee, commented on the report: "All Londoners would benefit from a police service that thinks, looks and acts like our city. There is much more that can be done, such as expanding flexible working and targeting BAME women as a specific group for recruitment, which would speed up diversifying the Met.

"When the Met is more representative of the city it polices, we will have a force to be reckoned with."

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OBE for Charlie

■ FROM PAGE ONE

Launched by Charlie Mullins in 1979 with just a bag of tools and an old van bought at auction, Pimlico Plumbers now has more than 200 professional trades people and a support team of around 50 staff serving customers across London, including some of the world's most famous names, such as James Bond star Daniel Craig and actress Dame Helen Mirren.

The company, which has a turnover of £20 million, serves Central and Greater London and currently has more than 170 vans, trucks and motorbikes on the streets of the Capital.

Mr Mullins is the archetypal entrepreneur, having started his business from scratch and building it into a multi-million pound enterprise.

His company's iconic blue and white vans can also be seen in Spain after Charlie launched a Marbella branch of the company last year to serve both local and ex-pat customers.

Outspoken and often controversial, Charlie has starred in Channel 4's "Secret Millionaire" and the BBC's "Young Plumber of the Year" programmes and is a regular business commentator in the national media.

Pimlico Plumbers and Mr Mullins support numerous charities and sporting organisations, having raised tens of thousands of pounds over the years.

Mr Mullins recently led the campaign to raise £100,000 for life-saving treatment for a three-year-old Pimlico girl.

Other New Year honours in London included:
● Commander of the Order of the British Empire - Miss Cressida Rose Dick, Assistant Commissioner Metropolitan Police Service, for services to the Police.

● OBE - Professor Paul Ekins, Director and Professor of Resources and Environmental Policy, Institute for Sustainable Resources, UCL, for services to environmental policy.

TV's favourite landlady drops in for a spot of tea



■ BARBARA Windsor made a special appearance at the Tea Dance

A THOUSAND senior citizens took to the floor at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London's Park Lane before Christmas for an afternoon of entertainment and dancing.

The tea dance, an annual event for over-65s, was organised by Westminster City Council in partnership with the Sir Simon Milton Foundation, a Westminster-based charity working to tackle loneliness in older people.

National treasure Barbara Windsor, MBE, made a special appearance at the event, the largest of its kind in the UK.

She said: "This is for all the people who don't get out so much - it's a way for the borough of Westminster to say thank you to the older generation who live here. This is when London is at its best."

The tea dance was founded by Cllr Christabel Flight, Westminster City Council's Older Peo-

ple's Champion, who campaigns for greater social inclusion for older people.

She is behind the phenomenally successful Silver Sunday initiative; a day of activities for older people which launched in Westminster and has now grown into a national event.

Cllr Flight said: "For many older people, opportunities to get out of the house purely to have fun are few and far between."

"The tea dance is a chance to do just that, and it is a privilege to see the smiles on people's faces every year."

Special hamper

The oldest guest at this year's Tea Dance was 102-year-old Lillian Bryant, who was presented with a special hamper.

Cllr Philippa Roe, leader of the Westminster City Council, said: "The tea dance is a highlight in so many people's lives - people look forward to this all year. In recent surveys, 30 per cent of

over 75s are lonely, 25 per cent of whom don't leave the house for days.

"Loneliness is a real issue, and it can affect the whole quality of people's lives as well as their physical and mental wellbeing. Events like this are so important because they get people together, creating an opportunity to meet other people and have a really lovely time."

The afternoon was hosted by the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Cllr Audrey Lewis; the leader of Westminster City Council, Cllr Philippa Roe; and event founder Cllr Christabel Flight.

Guests at this year's tea dance were treated to music from the Silver Manatees, a Beatles tribute group made up of local young people, and the Red Stripe Band, who were back by popular demand.

The tea dance was supported by the Daily Telegraph; Grosvenor House, a JW Marriott Hotel; ServicePoint and Shaftesbury Plc.



■ LILLIAN BRYANT, 102, the eldest guest at the tea dance is presented with a hamper



■ HAVING A LOVELY TIME! Guests enjoy the tea dance

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● COUNCILLORS CLASH OVER £54 MILLION SPENDING CUTS

‘Ducking the need for further pain’

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But in a letter to this newspaper, Councillor Emma Dent Coad, Leader of the Opposition Labour Group on RBKC, claims that the council can afford not to outsource play services, by dipping into reserves of £283 million.

"What is clear is that Cllr Campbell has no understanding whatever of the relative good fortune enjoyed by RBKC in 'tough times'", claims Cllr Dent Coad.

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Despite the criticisms from the Labour Opposition, Cllr Campbell is sticking to her guns that RBKC has to economise in order to deal with bigger cuts to come in Government funding.

"The main point is that the council has to adjust to a permanently-lower grant from central Government," she said.

"Neither our success to date in reducing our spending without loss of service, nor the council's reserves - which can only be spent once - enable us to duck the need for further economy in our recurrent spending."

"We estimate that we will need to reduce that spending by a further £54 million over the coming four years."

"Play centres managed by schools charge £32.50 per week, compared to £30 per week at council run centres. While we cannot guarantee charges will not rise,

this clearly shows that the sums are not worlds apart and, from September 2015, all working parents earning less than £150,000 a year will be able to claim back 20 per cent of the fees.

"Many after school play services are being taken on by the schools in which they take place, a model which has already proved successful in some schools in the borough and is the norm across most of the country."

"Our strategy to date also means we have managed to maintain the adventure and community play provision. Outsourcing will have no impact on the service, which will remain free, but will reduce the council's costs."

"We make no apology when an under-spend results from good management, rather than the loss of services, and this is the case in the Royal Borough. Many departments have to plan for the unexpected, for example the need to put someone in special care and when this budget is not spent, as Cllr Dent Coad has identified, the money goes into the Capital budget. This means our reserves allow us to invest in the future of the borough. Recently this has meant new schools, children's home, housing and the ongoing redevelopment of North Kensington."

"Our reserves also give us scope for local initiatives so that planned, annual spending is not changed at short notice and we do not have to wait for up to 12 months to begin."

Sir Malcolm joins borough credit union

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Doctor sublet council house

A KENSINGTON doctor, who pleaded guilty to charges under the Fraud Act 2006 after he sublet his council home for profit, was today given a community order of 135 hours unpaid work and ordered to pay full costs of £7,613.75 at £650 a month at Isleworth Crown Court.

At an earlier hearing in November, at the same court, Dr Babiker Babiker, 40, formerly of Bramley House, Kensington, W10, admitted to making a monetary gain by subletting the property.

Dr Babiker had applied to buy his council flat under the Right to Buy scheme which would have given him up to a £75,000 discount off its market value. However, during the valuation process concerns were raised that Dr

Babiker and his family were not using the property as their main and principal home.

These concerns were relayed to the Council's Fraud Investigation Team which then carried out a thorough investigation which established that Dr Babiker had in fact sublet the flat to another family while he and his family were living in North Wales.

At the original hearing Judge Dugdale commented that council homes were a limited resource let at a reduced rate.

No remorse

During the sentencing hearing Dr Babiker said he was trying to help the sub-tenant, who needed somewhere to live.

Judge Reid, sentencing, said that Babiker had shown no remorse and described his actions as a "piece of thoroughly dishonest behaviour."

Speaking after sentence was passed, Councillor Rock Feilding-Mellen, Deputy Leader of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Cabinet Member for Housing, said: "The pressure on social housing in London is acute. It is totally wrong therefore that a council tenant, who receives such a scarce resource, should then seek to profit by renting it to another family while living elsewhere."

"I am very pleased that the court has taken such a dim view of Dr Babiker's actions. I want to thank the council officers who, when alerted to possible wrong doing, investigated this case. We will always be vigilant to possible housing fraud and take all steps to ensure it is punished."

The Tenant Management Organisation for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has now repossessed the property.



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LONDON WEEKLY NEWS

Showing London 'at its best'

■ THE spectacular ticketed show was declared a success



Firework tickets declared a success

MAYOR Boris Johnson's plan to make the New Year's Eve fireworks safer by driving most people to watch it on TV has paid off – with the Big Ben Boris Bang spectacular drawing more than 13 million viewers.

London's 11-minute display of 50,000 whizz bangs was watched by 12.3 million on BBC1 and another 807,000 online, making the TV finale to 2014 the third most-watched programme over the year, with more viewers than Strictly Come Dancing, The X-Factor and all of the soaps.

Only England v Uruguay (13.9 million) and the Great British Bake Off final (13.5 million) had more viewers.

For the first time the event was ticket-only, with 100,000 paying £10 to see the fireworks. The viewing areas were restricted after 500,000 turned out to watch the display in 2013, causing safety fears that the crowd was unmanageable.

The £1 million display blew up a total of 15 tons of explosive, with 12,000 fireworks producing 50,000 projectiles.

● By LWN reporter **GEOFF BAKER**
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

The Mayor hailed the event as “fabulous” and showing ‘London at its best’ and in a New Year message he said the fireworks topped a record year for the capital.

Thanking the 4,000 police and 3,000 stewards who controlled the night, the Mayor said: “The dazzling celebrations have shown London at its best. I hope everyone who attended and watched from home, here in the UK and across the globe, were as impressed with this fabulous showcase for our great city.

Spectacular year

“The success of this huge event is down to the hard work of all those involved, including the Met Police, emergency services, TfL, local authorities and many others that made sure everyone enjoyed their evening and got home safely. It's a great start to 2015, I'd like to thank everyone involved and wish you all a very happy New Year.

“2014 has been a spectacular year for our city with all sorts of records being claimed. More people are using the buses than before, more people are



■ **LOOKING FORWARD to achievements in 2015 - the Mayor of London Boris Johnson. Photo by REX**

using the Tube and more people are cycling – 580,000 journeys by bike every day.

“Crime is down. We are building record numbers of homes, more than in any year since 1980, and on course to

build 100,000 affordable homes by 2016. We've successfully reopened Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and welcomed even more visitors to the city than in 2013, when we knocked Paris and New York off the top spot.

“2015 promises to be even better. We will begin constructing the first Tube extension in 15 years on the Northern Line. We are planning for the beautiful Garden Bridge, as well as the cultural quarter that will be Olympicopolis in Stratford. We're also starting work on two massive cycle superhighways, east to west and north to south and, for the first time in its history, we will see the Tube running 24 hours at weekends.

“I have no doubt that London will continue to be at the forefront of our country's improving economy.

“We are seeing more and more jobs being created and I have just announced more funding to boost appren-

ticeships, which along with training, will give more Londoners the skills they need to play their part in our city's future prosperity. It is critical that all Londoners can benefit from the recovery - that's why I'm urging more companies, large and small, that can afford to pay their staff the London Living Wage, to do so in 2015.

“We've seen a massive uptake in firms paying the living wage as employers realise the benefits - from increased productivity to improved employee loyalty. For some of the lowest paid Londoners it's made a real difference, putting money back into the pockets of thousands of families across the city.

“Of course we face huge and continued challenges, which I as your Mayor, along with my team at City Hall, will continue to work hard to tackle head on.”



Writing for the **London Weekly News** every week, London's favourite entrepreneur

Charlie Pipes Up!



Make sure you get the right people around you

Welcome to 2015! A year of new possibilities and opportunities. If one of your New Year's Resolutions is to start your own business and harness some entrepreneurial spirit, then all the best to you; however, make sure you surround yourself with the right people.

The saying goes, 'No man is an island', which as an entrepreneur can be a tough one to agree with, but there's a massive difference between being a self-motivator with a vision and a lone wolf who thinks doing it alone will prove successful.

A good entrepreneur should always have good people around them. Even before taking on their first employee, a new business owner should have a strong support group that will help get the enterprise off the ground, not just financially, but through invaluable advice and guidance.

Of course, family is important, but their support is often rose-tinted, so it's essential to have the backing of others who have the battle scars from the world of business and have basically been there and done it.

When I started my business in 1979 you could count the number of business organisations and government schemes on one hand. We have the polar opposite now with all manner of business groups, government-backed programmes and mentoring schemes to call upon.

These are great, but I'd always recommend being able to call on some first-hand experience. Not only can you bounce ideas of them, but also receive frank and honest advice about how to deal with the challenges and obstacles that face new businesses.

It is very easy, however, to listen to people with none or very limited business experience who do not understand the 'long-game' of running a new enterprise.

Last year I offered support to a bloke

called Stephen Smith from Birmingham who is better known as 'Smoggy' or '50p Man' after he appeared on Channel 4's Benefits Street.

His innovative, back to basics entrepreneurial style caught my eye amongst the misery and dross of the programme. He was selling things door to door for 50p each and had an ambition to open a store in Birmingham that would undercut people like Poundland.

As well as offering to mentor Smoggy, I'd also committed to investing some money and was going to help him find some premises. Unfortunately he got in with the wrong people who started demanding money for his services before we had things up and running.

It was a real case of not understanding the money isn't there until you actually do some hard graft. I think Smoggy understood, but as I said, there were too many voices and they were telling him to put the cart before the horse.

Having the entrepreneurial spark is a real gift, but without the right people around them to kindle the flame, a new business idea will be extinguished.

Finally, I wanted to thank everyone who has offered me their best wishes after I was awarded an OBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours. I was incredibly honoured, particularly as it was for services to plumbing.

I am so proud to be part of the industry and I hope that I can be an inspiration for young people starting an apprenticeship in the sector and also to those small business owners who can build their businesses into something special that creates and employment and puts something back into the economy.

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Kensington News pick up points

TCG Co-op MM Premium	210-212 Earls Court Road	Kensington	SW5 9QB
Sainsbury's Store	158a Cromwell Road	South Kensington	SW7 4EJ
Tesco Metro	146-148 High Street	Kensington	W8 6SU
Sainsbury's Store	Ladbroke Grove	London	W10 5AA
Tesco Metro	224-226 Portobello Rd	Notting Hill	W11 1LJ
Tesco Metro	114-120 Notting Hill Gate	Notting Hill	W11 3QE
Tesco Super Store	West Cromwell Road	Kensington	W14 8PB

London Weekly News pick up points

Sainsbury's Store	Melbourne Avenue	West Ealing	W13 9BZ
Tesco Metro	94 Church Street	Paddington	NW8 8EX
Tesco Classic Metro	17-25 Regent Street	London	SW1Y 4LR
TCG Co-op City	104-105 Bernick Street	Soho	W1F 0QS
Sainsbury's Store	38 Stratton Street	Mayfair	W1J 8LT
Sainsbury's Store	15-17 Tottenham Court Road	Central London	W1T 1BJ
TCG Co-op MM Mainstream	504-506 Harrow Road	Paddington	W9 3QA
Tesco Classic Metro	22-25 Bedford Street	London	WC2E 9EQ
TCG Co-op City	Golden Cross House	London	WC2R 0RG

Westminster & Pimlico News pick up points

Sainsbury's Store	99 Wilton Road	Pimlico	SW1V 1DT
Tesco Metro	18-28 Warwick Way	Westminster	SW1V 1RX
Tesco Classic Metro	Dean Street	Westminster	W1D 3RS
Tesco Classic Metro	10-16 Goudge Street	Westminster	W1T 2QB
Tesco Metro	90-100 Edgware Road	Westminster	W2 2EA
TCG Co-op City	19-21 Store Street	Westminster	WC1E 7DB

New art installation for Portobello Road

A NEW art installation by London-based artist Peter Dunn has been unveiled on Portobello Road, Notting Hill.

"Heart of the Community" is the eighth in a series of original art installations commissioned by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea on the Portobello Road North Wall, and will remain in situ for six months.

The series of photomurals celebrates key personalities, history and events of the Golborne and Portobello area over the past 100 years and explores identities through history.

Peter Dunn won international recognition with his pioneering use of billboards and photomurals during the 1980s. He later moved into three dimensional public artworks and digital installations, ranging from a five metre tall "Tree of Life" which generates power from the wind, to interactive projection systems engaging thousands of people and linking two towns. "Heart of the Community" marks Peter's return to the medium of the photomural.

Value for all

Mr Dunn said of the work: "I focused on the extraordinary acts of ordinary people who rose above the challenges life dealt them to create something of value for us all."

"A lot of history happened behind this wall, starting with Portobello Farm which gave the road its name. So I decided to

open up the wall, showing different events in a time-space continuum. I've also had fun playing with the tradition of history painting - the epic sweep and exaggerated perspective. I've incorporated the styles, and in some cases the work of artists of a particular period. There are some visual jokes too - enjoy."

Councillor Timothy Coleridge, Cabinet Member for the Arts, said at the unveiling: "The council is proud to support this new installation which brings the Portobello Road North Wall to life and celebrates the area's residents, history and events. Through his visual time capsule Peter offers us a portrayal of the people, events and developments that have shaped the communities of North Kensington."

The council is looking for the next new commission for the Portobello Road North Wall public art project. The title for the installation, "One Five Zero", is in recognition of the fact that 2015 marks the 150th anniversary of market trading in North Kensington.

"The council is keen to encourage submissions across a wide range of appropriate visual arts media, which engage with the theme of markets and "One Five Zero". Proposals must be submitted by email by 12 noon on Friday, January 30th 2015.



STEPPING THROUGH HISTORY: Artist Peter Dunn, left, with Cllr Timothy Coleridge at the unveiling of the art installation



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Outsourcing of Royal Borough play services

Sir

CLLR Campbell has not done her homework - which is unfortunate for the Cabinet Member with responsibility for education. On December 11th she wrote in *Kensington News* that the council is forced to outsource play services due to "a prolonged period of austerity". She then accuses the Labour Group of "trying to pretend that Kensington and Chelsea is somehow immune to the impacts of austerity".

What is clear is that Cllr Campbell has no understanding whatever of the relative good fortune enjoyed by RBKC in "tough times". The reality of cuts overall for the borough is shown below, and seen in the light of UNDERSPENDS it is of minor consequence:

Year	Government funding cut	Total underspend
2010/11	£11.6m	£9m
2011/12	£23m	£19.8m
2012/13	£13m	£24.3m
2013/14	£10m	£30.6m
TOTAL	£57.7m	£83.7m

A large chunk of the underspends every year are put into the Capital Reserve, to fund major projects, and the "usable Reserves" element was a whopping £283m in September 2014.

For Family and Children's Services which is Cllr Campbell's domain, from 2010 to 2013 there were underspends of over £4m, making the £500,000 cuts to our sorely needed Youth Services simply indefensible. Cllr Campbell may wish to study the figures below, which shows where unnecessary cuts were made in the last financial year:

Savings (which are equal to cuts)	Under-spends
2013/14	
Children with disabilities - £120k	£641,000
Looked after children - £206k	
Children's Centre Strategic Review - £500k	
Youth Services Mutual - £115k	
SEN Passenger Transport - £447k	

While it is true that other grants, eg, Sure Start and the Early Intervention Grant have been decimated under this government, it cannot be beyond the wit of Cllr Campbell to find these funds from underspends if she chose to.

Clearly she does not chose to.

Instead, Cllr Campbell has presided over: the reduction of youth services when good quality support for our young people has never been more crucial; halving the funding of Special Educational Needs Transport for disabled children, causing severe disruption and upset for vulnerable children and their families; and halving support for Children's Centres, putting low income working families under intolerable stress.

Her approach to Play Services, which is that money should always be saved when it can be, sits uncomfortably with her view of spending c£100m on a replacement Holland Park School (three times more than average). In her view, the income from selling the school's playing fields, which paid for the most expensive school in the Western hemisphere, meant it cost "nothing".

£100m is a great deal of "nothing". Back to school Cllr Campbell.

Cllr Emma Dent Coad

Leader, Opposition Labour Group, RBKC

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The ultimate holiday for your precious pooch

TWO thirds of London pet owners bought their pet a Christmas present, with a third of them spending up to £30 on the gift.

But now they can treat them even more as a Bloomsbury company is offering the ultimate holiday for a pampered pooch - a snip at almost £50,000.

Tavistock Square-based VeryFirstTo Ltd. is offering a dog "the most luxurious canine holiday of all time" - with a price tag of £47,000 for a break which includes its own chauffeur, a personal chef, reiki, pedicure and exercising with an Olympic athlete.

The company is listing the "unforgettable

fortnight" for a dog at the Paw Seasons hotel where the pet will go surfing and be given a 'counselling session' and its own private cinema.

For £3,337 per day, the holiday's experience will start with a chauffeur driving it the 118-mile trip to the Paw Seasons at Bristol, and from then it's bow wow wow all the way as the super-spoiling includes:

- A bespoke crafted doghouse replicating the dog's own home, 'to avoid any homesickness'.
- A private suite showing 'dog-favourite' movies including Lassie and The 101 Dalmatians. The cinema comes with its own 'dog-

friendly' popcorn.

● A personal chef to cook the pet's favourite meals.

● Beach and country walks with 'ice cream which is suitable for vegetarian dogs'.

● A running session with 400m hurdles world champion Dai Greene.

● A day with TV dog behaviour expert Stan Rawlinson, aka 'The Doglistener'.

● A reiki session with master reiki teacher Rob Fellow.

● A spa and groom session including an aromatherapy bath and body massage, wash and 'fluff dry' and a pedicure.

● A 'luxury wardrobe' including a Louis Vuitton collar, Bottega Veneta lead and a Mulberry rain mac.

● A bespoke solid bronze car mascot of the dog, sculpted for its owners, together with a portrait of the pet by artist Jo Chambers.

Paw Seasons, who say "our mission is to create dog heaven" with no kennels, pledge that owners curious about how their pet is enjoying the £47,000 experience will be kept in touch with it "via Facebook and YouTube".

Paw Seasons say they will donate £8,400 profits from the holiday to the Battersea Dogs and Cats Home.



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GENEROUS LONDONERS PAY THE PENALTY

The debt consequence of a merry Christmas

ONE in three adults have started the New Year in debt because of their spending over Christmas - with the average Londoner forking out £542 on presents and food and the average young adult spending £80 on booze.

Figures from loans company Evolution Money show that Londoners spent more than the national average of £490, with most of it (67 per cent) going on gifts and 22 per cent spent on food and drink.

A survey by the company revealed that 33 per cent of adults expected to start 2015 in debt because of their Christmas spending and two in every five adults said they felt pressured to

spend more than they could afford.

The most popular gifts for women were perfume, handbags and clothes whilst most men unwrapped a tablet, watch or after-shave. The most popular children's present was a portable gaming console.

Trips to the pub

However, another survey by First Direct bank claims that the entire 12-day Christmas period cost the average family an extra £642 on top on the money spent on presents and food for Christmas Day.

First Direct say that from Christmas Day to January 5th the average London family spent £195 on eating out, £121 on travel to visit family, £120 on shopping at the sales, £109 on

more food and £97 on drinks and trips to the pub.

The report found that most Londoners made three trips to the pub over the holiday season - but 5 per cent made 10 trips to their locals and the average 18-24-year-old spent £80 on alcohol.

First Direct's head of marketing Zoe Shore said: "We know that we have to splash out on gifts, decorations and Christmas dinner but we found that the majority of us don't account for what goes on after Christmas Day.

"With schools and many employers not re-opening until January 5th, Christmas became a two-week holiday for a lot of people and that meant extra expense which we found that 85 per cent hadn't budgeted for."

Sing to Live, Live to Sing workshops

LOOKING for a new activity for 2015? Try singing - to help improve breathing, relieve stress, develop core muscles and get better posture.

Singers say it also boosts confidence, encourages a feeling of belonging and improves overall mood and Kensington and Chelsea Council is backing Sing to Live, Live to Sing courses as "a great way" to have fun, make new friends and learn to sing in a relaxed and friendly environment.

The council launched the initiative as a pilot programme back in June and, due to its success, more workshops are starting in the royal borough this month.

The Sing to Live workshops are each led by an experienced singing tutor. Workshops are free of charge and open to all residents aged 16 years and over. No previous singing experience is necessary. Sing to Live, Live to Sing workshops for 2015:

● From Monday 12 January, from 2pm to 4pm and Thursday 15 January, from 5pm to 7pm with Sarah at Dalgarno Community Centre, 1 Webb Close, Dalgarno Way, W10 5QB.

● From Tuesday 6 January, from 7pm to 9pm and Friday 9 January, from 10am to noon with D Sharp at Chelsea Theatre, 7 World's End Place, King's Road, SW10 0DR.

● A Sing to Live, Live to Sing taster workshop with Maria Soriano will take place on Wednesday, January 14th from 12.15 pm to 2.15 pm at Response Community Projects, 300 Old Brompton Road, SW5 9JF.

Newcomers are welcome to join workshops at any of the venues. Visit www.rbkc.gov.uk/singtolive to check for up-to-date Sing to Live, Live to Sing venues and workshop dates.

COMING SOON!

The London Weekly News website is currently under construction. In the meantime, if you would like to view the LWN pages digitally, you can access them by clicking onto <http://bit.ly/1vS5sl8>

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Pollution 'killing thousands' says the city clean air group

LONDON Mayor Boris Johnson has been told to "wake up and take action" after new research claims that air pollution is killing thousands of more people in the capital than was previously known.

A study by Clean Air London estimates that as many as 7,500 people a year are dying as a result of air pollution – a huge increase on the figure of 4,300 currently claimed by the Greater London Authority.

The extent of the capital's "silent killer" has been slammed as "shocking" and "catastrophic" by critics of Mayor Boris Johnson's policy on air pollution.

Although the GLA is taking steps to cut pollution, Clean Air London estimates that in five years' time, 6,851 Londoners will still suffer an early death because of air pollution in the city visited by 600,000 cars per day.

The new data released by Simon Birkett, of Clean Air London, is drawn from a study commissioned by the Mayor as part of the Health Impact Assessment for the proposed Ultra Low Emission

Zone and states that current estimates suggest 6,851 Londoners could die each year by 2020 as a consequence of the capital's air pollution problem.

Prior to this study, it was believed that 4,300 lives were prematurely lost in the capital each year as a result of air pollution. The new figures include analysis of the impact of additional nitrogen dioxide categories of pollutants which are known to be detrimental to public health.

Capital's silent killer

In the summer the Mayor provided more details on an Ultra-Low Emission Zone but the scheme would only cover a small area of London and would not come into effect until after 2020.

Labour London Assembly member John Biggs has welcomed the scheme but said it doesn't go far enough.

Mr Biggs, Assembly member for City & East London, said: "For years we have known air pollution is the capital's silent killer, now we know just how bad the situation has got.

"For 4,300 Londoners to prematurely die as a

consequence of air pollution was shocking enough. The fact that the real figure is nearer 7,500 it is truly catastrophic.

"Boris Johnson has a truly appalling record on tackling air pollution. It has taken six years for him to wake up to the scale of the capital's air quality crisis. His proposals for an Ultra-Low Emission Zone are not only un-ambitious but are designed to leave the problem for his successor to grapple with.

"Londoners want to see the proposed Ultra Low Emission Zone made bigger, stronger and more effective. Quite frankly, if these new figures don't cause the Mayor to wake up and take action, nothing will".

The report says: "Clean Air London speculates that total annual deaths attributable to nitrogen dioxide and dangerous airborne particles currently may be around 7,500 in London and around 55,000 in the UK.

"The new estimates confirm that the Mayor's so-called Ultra-Low Emission Zone in 2020 is too small, too weak and too late."

New yacht for the new year?

VISITORS to the London Boat Show which opens on Friday will need to raid their piggy banks to afford the top British boat – Sunseeker's £4.7 million 28-metre yacht, which costs £51,700 per foot.

The luxurious yacht from the Poole-based boat builders is the most expensive boat on display at the ExCel exhibition centre at Royal Victoria Dock. With a maximum speed of 29 knots, its full price is £4,763,000 plus VAT.

For almost the same money, fans of high-end boating can buy three of the Princess 68 boats being exhibited by US builders Princess Yachts – the 69ft, four-cabin will be on display with a price tag of £1,615,000 + VAT.

Nineteen marine businesses from London will be exhibiting at the prestigious CWM FX London Boat Show.

Taking place at ExCel London from January 9th -18th, this world-renowned event is where organisers say 'adventure starts, pioneers meet and innovation shines'.

The London boat-builders, including Mayfair's Ventura UK, will join 400 other companies 'to offer aspiring adventurers the opportunity to explore the very best of the marine sector'.

Earlier this year the British Marine Federation (BMF) published figures which indicate that the leisure marine industry in London alone contributed up to £102.1 million (3.5 per cent) of the UK industry's £2.905 billion total turnover, with more than 999 people from the region employed in the sector.

Key London-based companies taking part include Rota Marine, Sailing Holidays, Yachtsie, Cosmos Yachting, Ventura UK and Musto, the leading performance clothing brand, who will be hosting a live Q&A with Abu Dhabi Ocean Racing, streamed from the Volvo Ocean Race on the opening day of the show.

Organisers say visitors can "listen to inspiring talks, see the latest cutting-edge products, explore world debut boats and meet their sailing heroes".

They add: "Attendees will be given the chance to control the weather at the entrance to the show as they part a rain curtain of falling water to gain access. There will also be a pool giving visitors the opportunity to try activities such as kayaking and water walking for themselves.

"Budding boaters can plunge themselves in a variety of epic environments in the show's exhilarating 4D experience, taking in the atmosphere, scents and soundscapes of the world's seas from the Arctic to the Tropics and everything in-between."

Murray Ellis, managing director of the CWM FX London Boat Show said: "We're very excited about the Boat Show; it's the perfect event for anyone who is passionate about getting out on the water, whether that be in a canoe or on a multi-million pound yacht.

"We hope to kick-start the New Year by inspiring people to try something new, whether it's testing the elements at the 4D experience or climbing aboard the latest powerboats. This year's Show, with thousands of boats, brands and varied activities, reflects our great capital and will be a pioneering spectacle."

Adult tickets start from £10, with two children aged 15 or under going free with each admission. Additional concessions are also available. Tickets can be purchased from www.londonboatshow.com.



PURE LUXURY: The £4.7m Sunseeker yacht

Bookies predict a shift to the left in mayoral race

ODDS on favourites with the bookies to become the next Mayor of London:



Tessa Jowell 5-2 favourite



Sadiq Khan 5-1



David Lammy 9-1

EARLY tips by bookies are predicting a shift to the Left in the leadership of London when Boris Johnson is replaced as Mayor – with four of the five favourites for the post being Labour politicians.

But gamblers favouring a long shot could do well if David Beckham romps into City Hall at 125-1.

Odds listed by bookmakers Paddy Power put Labour MP Tessa Jowell as the front-runner to be the new Mayor next year.

Mayor Johnson is to stand for Parliament at the General Election in May, having been selected as the Conservative candidate for Uxbridge and South Ruislip. He says that if he is elected he plans to remain as Mayor until the end of his second term in May 2016, doing the two jobs as Ken Livingstone did after becoming Mayor in 2000.

"It has been done before and I see no reason why it shouldn't be done again," said Mr Johnson.

Tessa Jowell, MP for Dulwich and West Norwood, said she would formally announce her plan to run for Mayor of London after the General Election. Paddy Power has listed her as 5-2 favourite to win.



Alan Johnson 10-1

Behind her comes Labour MP for Tooting Sadiq Khan at 5-1, Labour Tottenham MP David Lammy at 9-1 and Labour MP for Hull Alan Johnson at 10-1.

Conservative peer and Olympic hero Lord Coe is fifth favourite for the post, with Paddy Power odds of 11-1. Lord Coe is reported to be Boris Johnson's favourite to replace him.

Doreen Lawrence, Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon, is listed as 14-1. Lady Lawrence, the massively-respected campaigner and mother of murdered teenager Stephen Lawrence, was named "the most powerful woman in Britain" in last year's BBC Woman's Hour 'Power List' poll.

She is ahead of controversial Respect Party MP George Galloway (16-1) and Labour Hackney MP Diane Abbott (22-1).

The bookies calculate that least-likely to become Mayor is the former Lib-Dem MP and 2011 candidate Lembit Opik, who is listed by Paddy Power at odds of 200-1 – behind TV Apprentice star Lord Alan Sugar (66-1) and David Beckham and iconoclastic journalist



Sebastian Coe 11-1

Richard Littlejohn (both at 125-1).

However, the ranked outsider could surprise the bookies yet. Following his defeat in the 2011 mayoral election, Mr Lembit predicted: "People haven't heard the last of Lembit Opik just yet, I'll be back. So watch out for the sequel, Lembit Opik Strikes Back, coming to a political platform near you in the not too-distant future."

RANK outsiders:



Richard Littlejohn 125-1 and Lembit Opik, below, 200-1





Prince Charles hailed as 'beacon of hope'

LWN

ROYAL
SPECIAL

■ NEW Cystic Fibrosis Trust Patron Prince Charles chats to staff on a pre-Christmas visit to the Royal Brompton Hospital in Chelsea

ROYAL PATRONAGE FOR TRUST WORKING TO FIND A 50TH YEAR CURE FOR CRIPPLING DISEASE

By Geoff Baker

PRINCE Charles has been hailed as “a beacon of hope” for stepping in to personally lead a medical research battle to win the war against one of the world’s most crippling diseases.

Medics and charity organisers say that with Prince Charles now onboard as the new Patron of the Cystic Fibrosis Trust his fame and influence will help drive more public support and donations to fund finding a cure for the illness that devastates the lives of more than 10,000 sufferers in the UK.

With the popular prince involved, his power-house effect is expected to dramatically increase public awareness in the same way that he has forged change in opinion with his championing of his other key causes, including organic farming and climate change.

“The Charles factor makes a massive difference to the fund-raising and understanding for any cause,” said one royal observer.

“He is the Pele of patrons and he inspires people by getting out there and mixing in with those on the front line. Both the Trust and the patients will benefit hugely from Charles leading the cause.”

As part of the new profile-raising drive, the Trust is inviting Londoners to take a high jump challenge – abseiling 262 ft from the UK’s tallest sculpture in a sponsored “fall” from the ArcelorMittal Orbit in April at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

To kick-off his new role, Prince Charles met with medical staff and patients at the cystic fibrosis centre of The Royal Brompton Hospital.

Typically, he abandoned pomp and marked his first official engagement as Patron by sitting with patients to get first-hand understanding of their problems and raising spirits and laughter with nurses.

Dr Su Madge, a consultant nurse in cystic fibrosis, said: “Cystic fibrosis is not a well-known condition, so to welcome Prince Charles to our unit to meet

patients and staff is a great help in raising the awareness of this life-limiting disease.

“The Prince of Wales was genuinely interested in the specialist work we do at the Royal Brompton. He was knowledgeable about available treatments

and took great interest in hearing from the patients about living with and managing the disease.”

Royal Brompton Hospital was home to the UK’s first adult cystic fibrosis service, which was established in 1965, by Sir John Batten, to provide treatment to the increasing number of patients living with the condition into adulthood. Since then, Royal Brompton has been responsible for the introduction of many treatment innovations

that are now regarded as routine and was a model for the development of other centres in the UK and Europe.

Today, the multidisciplinary team, which includes consultants, specialist nurses, dieticians, physiotherapists, clinical psychologists and pharmacists, provide expert inpatient and outpatient care to almost 700 adults and 350 children and their families.

“Cystic fibrosis is not a well-known condition, so to welcome Prince Charles to our unit to meet patients and staff is a great help in raising the awareness of this life-limiting disease”

■ TURN TO PAGE 3

Inside London’s new weekly



Photo by REX/TIM ROOKE



The Royals gather for Christmas at Sandringham

Westminster & Pimlico News (established 1857) ♦ Chelsea News (established 1869)
♦ Kensington News (established 1869)



ROYAL LONDON

Anniversary boost for the Cystic

Prince Charles 'proud to be Patron in 50th year'

■ FROM PAGE ONE

In a speech during his visit, the Prince, who has succeeded Princess Alexandra as Patron, told leading figures from the Trust and the Royal Brompton: "I just want to say, I'm so delighted to have a chance to visit the hospital and the unit here, which I know does such wonderful work on the cystic fibrosis front."

"But also I'm so proud to have become patron of the Cystic Fibrosis Trust in its 50th anniversary year."

"Over all those years I know the Trust has battled in the most remarkable way, together with so many people like yourselves who help to assist patients with this appalling condition."

"I just wanted to use this opportunity not only to salute you all for the work you do, but also to wish

all those who I know are doing such good work in finding better and better answers to dealing with this condition every possible success in the future."

The Prince visited people on the hospital's Foulis Ward, which is dedicated to treating cystic fibrosis patients.

The condition is an inherited disease caused by a faulty gene which controls the movement of salt and water in and out of cells. It causes lungs and digestive systems to become clogged with mucus, making it hard to breathe and digest food.

The Prince chatted to Nicholas Mason, 25, whose lungs have been damaged over the years so he now breathes with the help of an oxygen cylinder.

The chemist, from Steyning in West Sussex, told His Royal Highness he was receiving treatment for a recurring infection.

He told the Prince: "Earlier this year I was in for about seven weeks. It gets better, sometimes it gets worse - this admission is going quite smoothly."

The Prince of Wales also met Chris Pickton, 24, from Feltham, who has been hospitalised three times this year after contracting mycobacterium abscessus, which is a particularly dangerous virus for patients with cystic fibrosis.

He talked to Prince Charles about the need for cystic fibrosis patients to have a high calorie diet and the many lifelong treatments required to manage the condition.

Chris said: "I was very much looking forward to meeting Prince Charles. He was very easy to talk to and interested about cystic fi-

brosis and the continued advances in treatments. The Prince asked about what I can and cannot eat and I told him I can eat anything - almost like an anti-diet."

Before leaving, The Prince learned about the Trust's ambitious plans for the future, including SmartCareCF, whereby equipment used to monitor patients can now send the information via a smartphone to doctors, saving on appointments and allowing medical staff to spot problems earlier.

Ed Owen, Chief Executive of Cystic Fibrosis Trust, said: "As a long-time supporter of people with cystic fibrosis, the Prince has a deep understanding of the challenges that people with the con-

dition face, including the daily burden of physiotherapy, nebulisers, dozens of pills and exercise, as well as regular hospital visits and admissions."

He added: "Today less than half of people with cystic fibrosis will die before their 40th birthday, but we are committed to changing this. We are redoubling our efforts to beat cystic fibrosis for good, and the Prince's support will provide a powerful beacon of hope for all those touched by the condition."

◆ For details of how to help the Trust, including signing up for the April 12th ArcelorMittal Orbit Abseil, go to www.cysticfibrosis.org.uk



■ PRINCE Charles meets one of the patients at the Royal Brompton Hospital
Photos by ALEX ORROW



■ WELCOME: Prince Charles is greeted at the entrance to the Royal Brompton Hospital by the Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Councillor Maignhead Condon-Simmonds. BELOW: Meeting hospital staff and Cystic Fibrosis Trust officials



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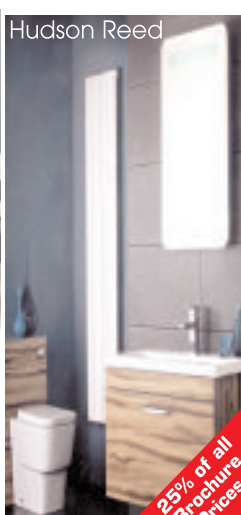
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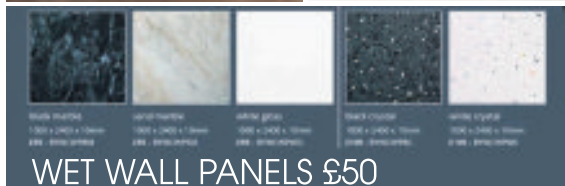
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Fibrosis Trust with Prince Charles becoming their new Patron



■ ON his visit to the Royal Brompton Hospital in Chelsea, his first as the new Patron of the Cystic Fibrosis Trust, Prince Charles spent much of his time chatting to patients about their condition. He also took the opportunity of speaking to as many staff members as possible, including the nurses at the hospital, and officials of the Trust which is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Photos by ALEX ORROW



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ROYAL LONDON

The Royals gather for Christmas...

HUNDREDS of wellwishers turned out on Christmas morning to welcome the Royal family as they gathered for the traditional service at Mary Magdalene Church on the Sandringham Estate.

The royals made the traditional walk from Sandringham House to the church but the crowd were disappointed that 17 month-old Prince George was not among them.

...but where was baby George?

Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge apologised to the crowd for baby George's no-show, with Kate explaining: "We're sorry we didn't bring George but you would have heard him in the church."

And William told well-wishers it was a bit cold for George but they had left him in his nursery and were looking forward to seeing what "destruction"

he had created when they got home.

The Queen, 88, dressed in a bright cerise Angela Kelly coat, arrived by car and about 15 members of her family, including Prince William and Kate, Prince Philip, Prince Charles and Prince Harry, Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie and Princess Anne, attended the church service where hymns included Once in Royal David's City and Hark the

Herald Angel's Sing. Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, did not join them as she had a bad back.

Kate's parents, Carole and Michael Middleton and her sister Pippa and brother James also attended the church service as they are spending Christmas with William and Kate at their new country home, nearby Anmer Hall.

After the service, the Queen got straight into her car and did not stop to take flowers from children, but the rest of the royals chatted to the 2,000 strong crowds.



■ ASSISTED by William and Harry, the Duchess of Cambridge receives floral gifts from wellwishers. RIGHT: Sophie, Countess of Wessex - elegant as always



■ PRINCESS Anne escorted her father, the Duke of Edinburgh, into church for the Christmas morning service



■ HER Majesty The Queen looking resplendent in a bright cerise Angela Kelly coat and matching hat

Royal Mint reveals Queen's fourth portrait special collector coin sets

IN celebration of a vintage year for coins The Royal Mint has released a final collector's last edition of UK definitive coin annual sets bearing the fourth portrait of Her Majesty The Queen - a constant presence on circulating coins since 1998.

In November 2014, The Royal Mint announced that the fourth definitive coinage portrait of the Queen is to be replaced by a new fifth effigy - an historic event for Britain's coinage.

The Royal Mint is to say farewell to the likeness captured by Ian Rank-Broadley FRBS with a final release of The Royal Mint's Annual Sets for 2015, presented in stylish packaging and accompanied by a certificate authenticating the special edition release.

Each set comprises the definitive coins of the United Kingdom, from the 1p to the £2, each adorned for the last time by the familiar fourth definitive portrait of Her Majesty on the obverse, and is available in four editions; Brilliant Uncirculated, Proof, gold Proof or silver Proof.

Speaking about the release of his design in 1998, sculptor Ian Rank-Broadley FRBS said, "I hope that in time I may be regarded as having made a valuable contribution to the rich and varied history of coinage in this country. When I see my initials, IRB, beneath the royal effigy on the coins as a record of my achievement, I feel honoured."

Shane Bissett, Director of Commemorative

Coin, Bullion and Medals at The Royal Mint, says: "The changing of a coinage portrait is an historic occasion - only four previous definitive effigies have featured on the coins we use every day during the 62-year reign of Queen Elizabeth II. As the nation awaits a glimpse of the new effigy, we wanted to offer collectors an exclusive opportunity to own a final celebratory issue of the coins bearing the celebrated fourth portrait."

The Royal Mint FACT FILE

THE Royal Mint has an unbroken history of minting British coinage dating back over 1,000 years. By the late 13th century the organisation was based in the Tower of London, and remained there for over 500 years. By 1812 The Royal Mint had moved out of the Tower to premises on London's Tower Hill. In 1967 the building of a new Royal Mint began on its current site in South Wales, UK.

While The Royal Mint's finest traditions are always respected, it continually innovates in order to stay at the forefront of world minting, embracing the latest production techniques and technology in order to offer excellence to our clients across the globe. By underpinning our proud heritage with a highly progressive outlook, The Royal Mint produces coins that remain a byword for trust and reliability the world over.

There were estimated to be 28.9 billion UK coins in circulation at 31 March 2014, with a

total face value of over £4 billion, all manufactured by The Royal Mint. In total, nearly two billion UK coins were issued during 2013-14.

As well as over 1,000 years of producing British coinage, The Royal Mint has long been trusted with the currencies of other countries. It has served more than 100 issuing authorities around the world and currently meets approximately 15% of global demand, making us the world's leading export mint.

The Royal Mint has been making official military campaign medals since it was commissioned to make awards for soldiers who fought in the battle of Waterloo in 1815. The year 2012 was of particular significance for The Royal Mint's medal-making team, with the manufacture of all 4,700 Victory Medals for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Royal Mint has recently introduced a new fineness of Britannia bullion coins and a highly-secure on-site bullion vault storage facility, building on the gold Sovereign's long-standing reputation for integrity, accuracy. This positions The Royal Mint and its bullion products as a premium proposition in this marketplace.

In September 2014, The Royal Mint launched a new bullion trading website, www.royalmint-bullion.com, enabling customers to buy, store and sell bullion coins at constantly updated prices directly from The Royal Mint quickly, effortlessly and securely, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

In April 2014, The Royal Mint unveiled plans to develop a purpose-built visitor centre at its headquarters in Llantrisant, South Wales. Construction is expected to be completed during 2016.



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WINE & DINE

The food and
drink page for
West London

A food star is born

NATALIA Conroy knows a good deal about having too many cooks in the kitchen.

Author of new cookery title *The Kitchen Orchard*, the 26-year-old is married to fellow chef Jonathan, who she met while working at London's famed River Cafe restaurant, and boasts Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall as a former employer.

But far from squabbling over saucepans and meddling with each other's menus, theirs is a harmonious kitchen, and the two often take it in turns to cook in the evenings, or team up for their private dining clients.

"It's a real partnership," says Conroy, who studied Russian and German literature and language at Oxford University, and only started to consider cooking as a real career choice after a stint waitressing at River Cafe in her summer holidays.

"My husband's been cooking three times as long as I have, and in professional kitchens. The River Cafe was the only place I worked in a formal style, and although that was three years, that doesn't compare to the years he's racked up in other restaurants.

"So I take a lot of my form from him, and when we have a job, I tend to be a bit more anxious and he's more confident."

But Conroy, who was raised and lives in London, was a dealt a hefty boost of confidence from the acclaim she's drawn from her first book.

She draws inspiration from seasonal produce and her well-stocked store cupboard, and it's clear that winter is a fertile time for her.

"I guess I really enjoy being able to cook things slowly and to leave them to take their time," she says.

"It's a very hearty time of year, and I think everybody agrees, you feel more hungry in the winter. You need more energy to do things, and we're all a bit more glad for a nice bowl of something you've made an effort with."

Understandably for two chefs, the kitchen is the "hub" of the house and a great place to hunker down during the cold months.

"It's the room we're in most of the time," she says. "There are a lot of cookery books in piles on the floor. We've got a sofa in there as well; there's no way any other room is going to win over a room with a fridge and a sofa."

Among that "mountain" of books, is a treasured copy of Nigella Lawson's *Feast*. "When I was younger, Nigella was a massive inspiration. Her books made me feel like I could just make do and mend anything, and cooking was fun," she explains. "I remember going to a book signing when I was at Oxford, and Nigella was doing a signing of her book *Feast*. I went to meet her and it was the most exciting day ever."

And in a lovely twist, Conroy's own book attracted quotes of praise from Lawson, as well as from River Cafe co-founder Ruth Rogers and acclaimed food writer Claudia Roden.

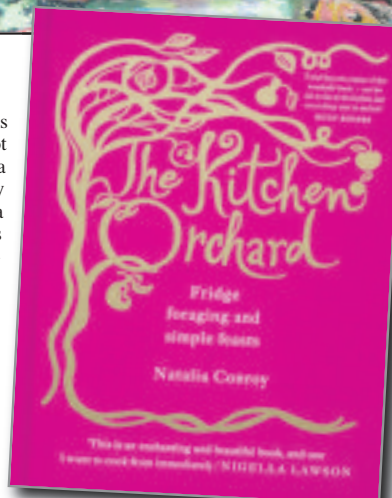
"Nigella's first food books were my favourites, and so it was absolutely amazing that she enjoyed my book. You can't really get higher praise and encouragement than from her.



■ **NATALIA Conroy, whose inspiration is Nigella Lawson, with her new book**

"When I got the book deal, it was a real honour, and I thought, 'I'm not sure I know enough to write a book,'" Conroy continues. "I really felt that was something Claudia Roden did and Nigella did, so it's wonderful to have praise from people who really know what they're talking about.

"Hopefully, I put out some recipes and ideas and thoughts about cooking that make people want to make something to eat. But obviously, I haven't spent my life researching food or cuisine. I've still got a long way to go, I guess."



MARK HIX'S RECIPE OF THE WEEK

MEAT AND POTATO PIE

Serves 4-6

I HAVE memories of a pie at school made with mince, served in a flat tray with pastry on top; I think it had a layer of mashed potato under the pastry, too. I've had a similar dish up in the north of England, so that's probably where it originated. We would normally be served this with mashed swede, which was a perfect match for me and this pie. Watery cabbage... not so much

700-800g good-quality, lean minced lamb or beef, or a mixture of the two

Vegetable oil for frying

2 large onions, peeled, halved and finely chopped

2 cloves of garlic, peeled and crushed

1tsp chopped thyme leaves

1tbsp flour

½tbsp tomato purée

1ltr beef stock (a couple of good stock cubes will do)

1tbsp Worcestershire sauce

1 glass red wine (optional)

2 servings of firmly mashed potato

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the pastry

225g self-raising flour

1tsp salt

85g shredded beef suet

60g butter, chilled and coarsely grated

1 medium egg, beaten

SEASON the minced meat with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Heat some vegetable oil in a large, heavy frying pan until it is almost smoking, and cook the meat in a couple of batches for a few minutes, turning it with a wooden spoon until it's lightly coloured, then drain in a colander to remove all the fat.

In a thick-bottomed pan, heat some more vegetable oil and gently fry the onion, garlic and thyme without colouring until they are very soft. Add the meat, dust it with the flour and add the tomato purée.

Cook for a few minutes, stirring constantly, then gradually add the red wine, Worcestershire sauce and the beef stock; bring to the boil and simmer for about 1 hour, until the liquid has thickened. Take it off the heat, check the seasoning and allow it to cool.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 180C/gas mark 5. To make the pastry, mix the flour and salt with the suet and grated butter. Mix in about 150ml of water to form a smooth dough and knead for a minute.

Roll the pastry on a floured table to about 1cm thick and cut out to about 2cm larger (all the way round) than the shallow pie dish you are using. Transfer the meat to the dish then top with the mashed potato.

Brush the edges of the pastry with a little of the beaten egg and lay the pastry on top of your pie, pressing the egg-washed sides against the rim of the dish and overlapping the rim.

Cut a small slit in the top of the pastry to allow steam to escape, or you can use an old-fashioned pie bird if you have one. Brush with beaten egg and leave to rest in a cool place for 30 minutes. Bake for about 40-50 minutes until golden.



Blues' season of goodwill

CHELSEA are one of the most famous and richest football clubs in the world but despite pursuing four major trophies this season, the club still makes a point of respecting its past and the men who put them on the map.

The club hosts a long established Annual Lunch at the stadium which is a significant fundraiser for the Past Players' Trust and the Chelsea Foundation, the heart of Chelsea's community and educational activities. The total raised in 2014 from which the charities will benefit is £77,000.

Everyone who once pulled on the famous blue shirt continues to receive a Christmas Harrods hamper courtesy of the west London club every year, while ex-Blues are entertained free of charge at home matches. One grateful recipient is Peter Brabrook, who made his debut for Chelsea at the

TONY McDONALD
on how Chelsea FC look
after their old
players - especially
at Christmas

age of 17 in their first League championship-winning season of 1954-55, going on to make 271 appearances before his transfer to West Ham United in 1962.

Brabrook, now 77, was in the process of unpacking his hamper at home, near Basildon in Essex, when LWN caught up with him. He said: "All of us former players understand that we are easily forgotten after you've left a club and in many cases we are. But Chelsea are the exception in that they always try to look after their old players."



■ **CHEERS:** Former Blue Peter Brabrook opens his Harrods Hamper from Chelsea



■ **PROUD MEMENTO:** Peter Brabrook's three senior England caps take pride of place in his home in Basildon

"It doesn't matter whether you've played only a handful of games for them or hundreds, we are all invited to the Annual Lunch. As well as meeting up socially with former stars like Frank Blunstone, who played with me in the '54-'55 side, Charlie Cooke, Terry Venables, Ron Harris and John Hollins, the dinners are - fixtures permitting - usually attended by the current Chelsea manager and first team squad members. They hold auctions, raffles and all proceeds go to help their less fortunate ex-pro's who may have fallen on hard times, or need help paying for operations."

Magnificent gesture

"Bobby Tambling, the popular 60s and 70s winger, is one who I know has benefited in this respect. And when I needed a left knee replacement about six years ago, the club offered to pay for it. I couldn't afford to have it done - it cost around £10,000 - but in the end Joe Cole paid for the operation out of his own pocket, which was a magnificent gesture."

"Joe was a Chelsea star at the time but I'd known him since he was 12 and part of the West Ham Academy, where I coached him and other kids such as Frank Lampard and Glen Johnson, who also went on to play for the Blues and England."

"Chelsea send me a lovely Harrods hamper every year. It's nice that they still think of us old boys. My family reckon it's fantastic, because not all clubs take the trouble."

"I also received a letter from them inviting me to apply for tickets to home games. They have an executive box for the free use of former Blues players, where we are very well looked after."

"Everyone knows that Chelsea's owner, Roman Abramovich, has got a few bob but he and his staff still makes sure the club looks after its own."

Brabrook won an FA Cup winner's medal with West Ham 50 years ago but he retains a large place in his heart for the club that signed him as a schoolboy and with whom he won all three of his senior England caps, including his debut appearance against USSR in the 1958 World Cup finals.

Explaining why he sought fame and fortune in west London instead of where he grew up on the other side of the capital, he added: "Chelsea had one of the finest talent scouts in the country in a guy called Jimmy Thompson, who scoured east London for youngsters that West Ham failed to snap up or who they let slip through the net. As well as myself, the Blues signed a couple of well-known



■ **BLUE-EYED BOY:** Peter Brabrook soon after Chelsea snapped him up.

Dagenham boys in Jimmy Greaves and Terry Venables. Like them, I played for East London Schoolboys and had been training with West Ham a couple of times a week before I left school - but they didn't sign me. I guess they just didn't rate me at the time."

"What swung it for me was the day I scored two goals for London Boys against West Germany Boys at Highbury. Before I got home, Jimmy Thompson - who had watched the game - was already waiting at my parent's house and ready to sign me for Chelsea."

"It all happened very quickly. Chelsea gave me a six-month train pass and the following Monday I was on the District Line tube from East Ham, where we lived at the time, to Fulham Broadway, to begin training at Stamford Bridge."

It was an expensive oversight by West Ham, who ended up having to fork out £35,000 - a large fee at the time - to bring Brabrook back to east London, where he made 167 appearances for the Hammers, plus 72 for his last professional club, Leyton Orient, before hanging up his boots in 1971.

Brabrook now works for West Ham as a part-time scout but he will never forget his early days with Chelsea, nor the club's generosity towards its former players.



■ **IN ACTION:** Peter Brabrook in one of his 271 appearances for Chelsea

All the news from Stamford Bridge - see page 28

TALK OF THE TOWN

MUSIC ★ THEATRE ★ PUBS

*The entertainment scene
in West London*

Can Adam fill Freddie's iconic shoes?

By Geoff Baker

IT took a long time for Queen to find us somebody to love as much as Freddie Mercury. But that was no surprise because Freddie's were the biggest shoes in rock to fill.

As the front-man for the band that has had album sales of more than 300 million, with more weeks in the UK album charts than anyone including The Beatles, creators of the UK's biggest-selling album of all time (Queen's Greatest Hits) and the writer of the song [Bohemian Rhapsody] polled by The Guinness Book Of Records as 'Britain's favourite hit of all time', Freddie was always going to be as difficult to replace as finding the planet a new moon.

Many top rank stars had a good crack at the part, with artists including David Bowie, Elton John, Robbie Williams, George Michael, Annie Lennox and Lady Gaga standing in for Freddie with Queen at one time or another.

The great British voice of Free, the legendary Paul Rodgers, managed five years singing Freddie's part, but still it was not quite right.

But then, courtesy once again of star-maker Simon Cowell, Queen found American singer Adam Lambert and everything changed as what is in effect 'Queen II' began.

As canny as ever, Cowell saw it coming five years ago when Lambert was the runner-up on American Idol.

"The hope and the whole idea of a show like this is to find a worldwide star – and I truly believe that we have found that in you," said Cowell as Lambert cel-



■ ADAM LAMBERT in the New Year's Eve show with Queen's Roger Taylor in the background

ebrated almost winning by performing 'We Are The Champions' on American Idol's finale with Queen's Brian May and Roger Taylor.

It was meant to be a one-off but the combination clicked and when they performed together two years

later at a MTV awards it clicked again. Gigs followed, in the US, Europe, Japan, South Korea, and the combo kept on clicking.

And now, as millions witnessed when they performed on BBC1 on New Year's Eve, 'Queen II' has been well and truly born.

No die-hard fan could have failed to have been impressed by Lambert's performance at the NYE show; he hit the high notes and rocked the place, no mean feat when doing what most top rock stars will tell you is the thing they like the least – playing live on television, where no mistake goes unnoticed.

The BBC said the NYE show was Queen's first live show on the Beeb since 1975. That's not strictly true, for in 1985 Queen performed live on TV at Live Aid and it was their world-beating performance to a global audience of 1.9 billion which completely stole the greatest show on Earth and shot the band, and their record sales, to new sky-high fame.

Champions again

There was something of the same 'Live Aid factor' in the NYE performance. Although the band is without now-retired bassist John Deacon, there was a feeling that after years on the sidelines, with Lambert as their front-man Queen are the champions again.

They don't like to be called 'Queen II', preferring to bill themselves as Queen + Adam Lambert. But Queen II is what they are – but in that title they are not a comeback band, nor a resurrection but rather, a brand new incarnation.

"I'm just so honoured to be able to sing the songs that Freddie and the band wrote and to just try to bring to them some of original flavour, the original energy that you see in their videos and concert footage," said Lambert.

"My goal is to just try to do that, to remind people of what the essence of Queen is.

"I'm Adam onstage, I'm not playing Freddie; I'm not trying to be him. And I will never compare myself to Freddie because he was one in a million.

"But his recordings and performances were so incredible that I can't help but be inspired by them. I don't want to move too

far away from the music the band created, but I do want to put my stamp on everything.

"That was the biggest challenge, finding that middle ground of paying respect and not straying too far from those iconic recordings and Freddie's amazing vocals, but then not imitating him either."

Brian May and Roger Taylor, who first formed Queen back in 1968 when they were students at west London's Imperial College, are clearly delighted with their new 'signing'.

"Adam does a wonderful job," said May.

"My impression is that Adam is beautifully confident but he's never arrogant, he's always respectful and looking for the right way to do things.

"He brings himself to it, he's never an imitation. He doesn't need to pretend to be Freddie in any sense and it wouldn't work if he did.

"But there's parallels between the two guys; they are both wonderful singers, they both connect with the audience, they both have a lightness, there's a bit of humour there and teasing. Adam is a phenomenal artist."

Roger Taylor agrees.

"Adam is more suited to a lot of our material," he said. "We had great tours with Paul Rodgers, who has one of the greatest voices, but I think that Adam is more naturally at home with us."

"My wardrobe is almost as important as the music," Lambert once said. It is exactly the sort of quote you would have got from Freddie. Like Freddie, Adam Lambert is kaleidoscopically-flamboyant, has a tremendous four-octave range and is gay. The only difference is that thankfully now, as opposed to in Freddie's unenlightened time, his sexuality has no significance whatsoever to the music.

Lambert, who was only 10 when he first heard Queen in Wayne's World, has grown up being completely open and out and his openness has helped make him iconic in his own right, he was the first out star to top the Billboard charts with a debut album, selling 198,000 of its subsequent two million copies in its first week of release.

"Now, with Queen, you have a mix in the audience; you have diehard Queen fans and you have my fans who are coming to the show through my music, and it's bringing us all together," he says.

Brian May – who should know – agrees that with Adam Lambert onboard, Queen has been reborn magnificently.

"Adam is a natural and he just works so well with the music that we have that it feels new," says May.

"We're a proper band, people regard us that way and I'm happy that they do. It's a great arrangement; I don't know if it's a marriage, but it's a very good affair."

Queen + Adam Lambert play the O2 on January 17th and 18th. At the time of writing, one leading agency, Seatwave, was saying there were only 190 tickets left. The O2's website reported that there were no tickets for sale but some may become available nearer the time of the gigs. But in the wake of the New Year's Eve show, it is impossible to believe that there will be an empty seat in the house.



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TALK OF THE TOWN ★ *The entertainment scene in West London*

Manics pay tribute to their fallen comrade

THE first band you might compare the Manic Street Preachers with is not Pink Floyd, but as poles apart as their music might be they do have more than a little in common.

Both bands featured mercurial, charismatic key players in Richey Edwards and Syd Barrett respectively; both were essential to their bands' initial successes but were gone by the time clubs had been replaced by arenas and old vans swapped for luxury tour buses.

Syd, of course, was one the Sixties' highest profile acid victims; he soon faded from the limelight after his time with the Floyd, but lived quietly in Cambridge until the age of 60 before he succumbed to pancreatic cancer.

Richey's light, a darker one than the effervescent Syd's, burnt out rather than faded away. A troubled soul, Richey's intelligent and highly politicised lyrics are the hallmark of the first three Manic Street Preachers albums – he disappeared in February 1995 and, with no body ever being found, wasn't declared dead for a further 13 years.

The Manics ended 2014 with a residency at The Roundhouse, a venue synonymous with the early Syd-fronted Floyd.

And whereas Pink Floyd paid homage to their former leader with the title track of their 1975 album, Wish You Were Here, this 20th anniversary outing for The Holy Bible – the Manics' third record and Richey's lyrical masterpiece – can be seen as a tribute to their fallen comrade.

Try and name another LP – let alone one that made the top ten – that covers such themes as sexual exploitation ('Yes'), se-

Review by James Coles Manic Street Preachers: The Holy Bible 20 The Roundhouse, Camden

rial killers ('Archives Of Pain'), anorexia nervosa ('4st 7lb') and Nazi death camps (both 'Mausoleum' and 'The Intense Humming Of Evil'). The Holy Bible does it all – and then some.

This is the band's third night in the capital and the last of a short tour of the UK and Ireland – so successful more dates for 2015 have already been confirmed – to celebrate this revelatory album and Richey Edwards' valediction.

Eerily vacant

The stage is dressed in camouflage netting and the three members of the band wear the military uniforms they sported when The Holy Bible was released in 1994; stage right is left eerily vacant.

The venue is lit an angry red and James Dean Bradfield spews out the words with venom, but the buoyant crowd – that so easily could be dragged down by the darkness of the songs' themes – sees reason for optimism. This isn't an act of nostalgia; this is catharsis and a celebration of the life and work of Richard James Edwards.

The second half of the show simply cannot live up to the feverish brawl of the opening act, but its mixture of hits, tracks from recent twelfth album Futurology and the odd rarity do the business.

Special guests include Georgia Ruth, who sings on 'Divine Youth' from the Manics' latest album, and Andy Cairns from Therapy, who joins the already beefed up second half line-up (which

boosts the three-piece with a keyboard player and additional guitarist) for a euphoric 'You Love Us'.

Set list: First half - THE HOLY BIBLE: Yes / If white americans told the truth for one day it's world would fall apart / Of Walking Abortion / She Is Suffering / Archives Of Pain / Revol / 4st 7lbs / Mausoleum / Faster / This Is Yesterday / Die In The Summertime / The Intense Humming Of Evil / P.C.P.

Second half - Show Me The Wonder [acoustic] / Motorcycle Emptiness / Dreaming A City (Hughesková) / You Stole The Sun From My Heart / Postcards From A Young Man / Europa Geht Durch Mich / If You Tolerate This Your Children Will Be Next / Donkeys / Walk Me To The Bridge / Divine Youth [with Georgia Ruth] / You Love Us [with Andy Cairns of Therapy] / A Design For Life.



■ FROM left, James Dean Bradfield (vocals/guitar), Sean Moore (drums) and Nicky Wire (bass/backing vocals), perform at the Roundhouse, Camden

Exhibition to explore culture of Irish diaspora

LONDON Irish Art 2015 will be officially launched by the Minister for Diaspora, Jimmy Deenihan, and The Irish Ambassador to Great Britain, Dan Mulhall, at 6pm on Thursday, January 15th.

From January 14th to 17th the work of over 40 Irish visual artists will occupy the impressive 3,000 square foot space of Central Hall, Westminster.

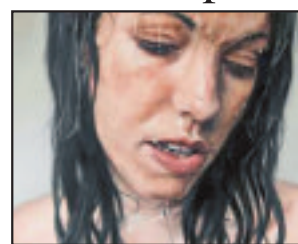
London Irish Art 2015 endeavours to explore the personal understanding and the experience of the Irish diaspora living in the UK, specifically in relation to culture, identity and creativity. A dynamic programme of art, poetry and music, will inform this exciting investigation.

A vast array of media will be explored, ranging from the more traditional forms of painting, photography, mixed media and sculpture to the more contemporary means of expression such as video work, installation work and stop-motion animation.

The exhibition will include works by the celebrated Irish artists Louis Le Brocqy, Robert Ballagh, the recent winner

of the RHA Sean Keating Award for Outstanding Painting, Francis O'Toole, as well as renowned Irish sculptors John Behan and Aidan Harte, and UK-based Irish artists.

As London holds the largest Irish diaspora in the world, this exhibition endeavours to represent an on-going dialogue between the two countries. Striving to build ties and cultural relations with the Irish art scene in the UK, this event is organised to provide artists with cross border exposure.



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LONDON WEEKLY NEWS

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Striker search is R's priority



LOFTUS ROAD RANGERS REVIEW

QUEENS Park Rangers manager Harry Redknapp admits his desperate search for much needed reinforcements to ease his club's relegation fears is producing no ready-made solutions.

The R's have no money to spend in the January transfer window but even adequate loan signings are proving hard to come by for the Premier League strugglers.

He said: "There are one or two areas of the team where we'd like to strengthen by bringing in a couple of players on loan.



Charlie Austin defending in Sunday's FA Cup defeat Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

"But where are you going to find those who are going to make a big difference at this time of year? It's very difficult.

"We are not close to doing any deals at all and I really haven't got any clues as to where we're going to find any at the moment."

The biggest priority for Redknapp is to bring in another striker to supplement the in-form Charlie Austin, the leading English goal scorer in the top flight who has netted eight in QPR's last 10 Premier League games and 12 in all this season.

"We can't keep relying on Charlie, we need goals from other areas of the field, too," says Redknapp, whose team have only lost by the odd goal at Southampton, Chelsea, Newcastle and Arsenal. Their only drubbing was the 4-0 defeat at Manchester United last September.

Redknapp admitted there were "no positives" to take after seeing his side lose 3-0 to Sheffield United in the FA Cup at Loftus Road on Sunday. It means the R's have now won only two FA Cup matches in the last 14 seasons and have suffered 46 third-round losses out of 70 ties.

But if QPR survive in the Premier League against all odds, this latest cup exit will ultimately prove irrelevant.

As usual, some moronic fans lack any sense of perspective. QPR chairman and AirAsia boss Tony Fernandes could not be at the cup tie while he focuses all his attention on the aftermath of his Malaysia-based company's flight disaster which happened a week earlier. AirAsia's Airbus A320-200 crashed into the Java Sea with 162 people aboard en route from Surabaya in Indonesia to Singapore on December 28.

Fernandes tweeted: "Qpr fans hammering me. My concern right now is only families of our Surabaya flight. There is a good team now at qpr. Les, Chris, Phil mark Rebecca and @Ruben_E_G from shareholders helping harry. While I focus on Airasia."

Goals from McNulty and Campbell-Ryce (two) gave Sheffield United victory and Redknapp conceded it was no less than the League One side deserved.

"They were better than us," he said. "They looked like a team that hadn't played for 10 days and we looked like a team that has played four games in 10 days. We looked lethargic, they looked sharp and they thoroughly deserve their win.

"We looked sluggish. I had to play four or five players who have played three games in a short period but I had no-one else.

"What can you say afterwards? There's no point shouting and screaming."

Redknapp made seven changes from the side that drew 1-1 with Swansea City on New Year's Day, although top scorer Austin played the full game. The manager said: "The lads you bring in, you hope they'll come in and do a job, but I felt we only started playing when the two Chilean lads (Eduardo Vargas and Mauricio Isla) came on, we played football, we passed and moved, and we looked brighter. Before then, there was a lack of movement in us.

"There aren't many positives I can take from today. There aren't any, in fact. But we have been excellent at home all season."

In fact, QPR have the seventh best home record in the Premier League, losing only twice in 11 matches.

"Now we have to come back. Our next home game is against Manchester United (Jan 17), which will be a very difficult game. Next weekend we play Burnley - and that's a massive game for us."

Ahead of their crucial visit to Turf Moor in search of their first away win of the season, indeed their first point on their travels, R's currently occupy 16th position in the table, just one place above the relegation zone and two points better off than 19th-placed Burnley.

No wonder Redknapp describes it as "massive."

FOOTBALL FIXTURES

Thursday, January 8
Manchester City U21 v CHELSEA U21, 7.45.

Saturday, January 10
CHELSEA v Newcastle United, 3.00.
Burnley v QPR, 3.00.

Cardiff City v FULHAM, 3.00.

Crystal Palace U18 v QPR U18, 11.00.

Monday, January 12
FULHAM U21 v Southampton U21, 7.00.

Tuesday, January 13
CHELSEA U18 v Huddersfield Town U18, 7.05.

(at Aldershot), 7.05.

QPR U21 v Cardiff City U21, 2.00.

Blue & White In Brief

AFTER his three goals in Chelsea's last four league matches, John Terry (37) is now only one behind former Everton and West Ham's David Unsworth (38) as the Premier League's all-time top scoring defender.

Skipper Terry headed Blues into a second minute lead at Stoke and followed it with goals against West Ham and Spurs.

CHELSEA U21s completed another successful year on a high as they beat Norwich City with a five-star display in the Premier League International Cup.

Alex Kiwomya's brilliant volley gave Blues the lead midway through the first-half but it was a second-half full of quality that gave the 5-0 scoreline a festive gloss.

Norwich defender Gafaiti sliced Kiwomya's cross into his own net minutes after the restart, before Boga curled in a fine free-kick to settle the contest. Dominic Solanke added two late on to ensure the Academy ended the year in style.

Chelsea: Beeney, Dabo (Tomori 75), Houghton, Clarke-Salter, Dasilva, Colkett, Swift, Boga, Kiwomya (Sammut 75), Solanke, Palmer (Mitchell 75).

FULHAM U18s ended 2014 with a heavy 7-1 home defeat to Aston Villa.

The only time the visitors were troubled was when Mattias Kait made it 1-1, and then the floodgates opened.

Fulham: Norman, Fossey, Nabay, Opoku, Edun, De La Torre, Smile, Humphrys, Buffonge, Walker, Kait.

THREE goals during a dramatic opening seven-minute spell set QPR U18s on course for victory against Bristol City as the young R's signed off 2014 in thrilling style.

Olamide Shodipo, Andreas Komodikis and Dan Darbyshire were all on target early on, while debutant Francis Vincent came off the bench to add the all-important fourth goal.

QPR: Collings, Kakay, Williams (O'Sullivan 46), Butler, Garnett (Bowler 46), Arthur, Komodikis, Donnellan (Vincent 46), Darbyshire, Shodipo, Crichlow.

Diss-appointed Hammers

HAMMERSMITH and Fulham squandered a 10-point lead against Diss to crash out of the Intermediate Cup in the third round on Saturday.

The home side took a commanding 15-5 lead into the second-half thanks to a brace of tries from wing Henry Tanner and a coolly slotted penalty.

But Diss' heavier pack dominated the closing exchanges and the visiting side eventually ran out 26-15 winners.

Hammers' captain James Smart said: "We fought well for 60 minutes or so but just didn't have quite enough firepower to put them away. A few wasted chances here and there cost us the game but credit to Diss for a strong finish.

"We're now turning our attention to a tough match next weekend against Chiswick, which should be a real tussle."

Hammers took the Norfolk side by surprise in the opening 50 minutes, moving Diss around well in the opening exchanges to open their defence up for Tanner's first try of the afternoon. The wing took his second 15 minutes later after claiming a speculative high kick, before Diss hit back just before half-time with a try of their own.

Hammers extended their lead early in the second period with a well-taken penalty kick but H&F were visibly tiring and their scrum was creaking badly under pressure from a sold Diss pack.

The away side started to assert their dominance in the final quarter with a series of well-executed maul and scrum drives to help them cross twice and put the game beyond Hammers.

Hammers had ended 2014 on a high note. Two scores in the last quarter secured a hard-earned 26-17 win against an Honourable Artillery Co. side determined to avenge a run of recent defeats against their long-standing rivals.

The vocal crowd at Hurlingham Park were soon in fine voice, as early pressure from Hammers secured a penalty deep in the HAC half, with full-back Neil McClure's successful effort making it 3-0.

Hammers were soon on the scoreboard again with their first try of the afternoon. Good work by the pack at the ruck

● RUGBY UNION Hammersmith & Fulham...15 Diss... 26

secured quick ball for the backs, which was swiftly moved out wide into space. A jinking run by centre Tony Bryant saw him break the HAC line and release winger James Lo, who drew the covering defence before passing back inside for Bryant to cross for the score - 8-0, with the conversion narrowly missed.

This seemed to galvanise HAC, who subsequently enjoyed the lion's share of possession for the rest of the half. A well-organised defence and aggressive presence at the breakdown secured a strong platform for the visitors while frustrating the home team, who had to make do with a solitary further penalty to show for their efforts.

After a period of sustained pressure, a series of well-executed phases eventually stretched Hammers' line, and the resulting dog-leg was fully capitalised upon by the HAC full-back who broke well to cross under the posts.

With both sides penalised repeatedly for infringements, the rest of the half was to prove somewhat stop-start in nature. HAC continued to take the game to the home side, and it was only excellent scrambling defence by Hammers that prevented a further score by the visitors with the last play before half-time. The match was therefore finely poised at 11-7 as the referee blew his whistle for the break.

The second half started in much the same fashion but Hammers failed to stamp their authority on proceedings. Credit must be given to HAC, whose aggression in the tackle and work at the breakdown proved the catalyst for most of their opportunities during the afternoon. Indeed, the visitors' second score of the match arose from a turnover deep in the home side's 22, with a couple of quick passes resulting in a relatively simple score in the corner - 12-11 in HAC's favour.

With Hammers reduced to 14 men after prop Mark Blyghton was sin-binned for collective team indiscipline, the ball

ricocheted off the post, enabling Hammers to clear their lines and duly set up camp in the HAC half.

Taking advantage of this field position, strong Hammers phase play followed by quick hands by the backs put James Lo in close proximity to the HAC try-line, albeit with a considerable amount of work still to do. Nevertheless, a sharp cut back inside and drive for the line left the covering defence in tatters, and with a huge cheer from the home crowd Hammers were back in front, thanks to McClure's sweetly-struck conversion pushing the score out further to 18-12.

Despite 10 minutes of solid defence, a well-executed miss pass finally unlocked the home side, enabling the visitors to cross in the corner. But because the resulting conversion was missed, Hammers remained in front at 18-17.

As the game drew to a tense close, Hammers took it by the scruff of the neck, and slowly started to reassert some of the structure that had been witnessed in the first quarter of the game. Aggressive tackling by Hammers' back-row kept the tiring HAC runners at bay, with man of the match Alex Hart also prominent at the coalface.

A turnover of HAC's winger, who was unfortunately injured in the tackle, proved crucial as the ball spilled out in the loose, before being gratefully snapped up by Tony Bryant who put on the after-burners to run in his second try of the day - 23-17 to Hammers.

Another penalty at the breakdown gave Neil McClure the chance to put the game beyond the reach of HAC and his final successful attempt of the afternoon ensured the four points for the home side.

This Saturday Hammers take on Chiswick in a much-anticipated west London derby, with the sides sitting fourth and third in North West London 2 respectively.

***Hammersmith and Fulham is always keen to welcome new players to the club, particularly front-row forwards.**

Training is at Hurlingham Park on Tuesday and Thursday nights from 7.30pm. For more information visit www.fulhamrugby.co.uk or email jan.hrfr@hotmail.co.uk

SPORT

Thursday, January 8th, 2015

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Branislav Ivanovic goes down under the challenge of West Ham's Andy Carroll Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

TV replays are a must

IT will take more than Sunday's 3-0 FA Cup victory over second-tier Watford to put a smile back on Jose Mourinho's face.

He is probably still hurting from the freakish and potentially disastrous 5-3 defeat at Tottenham on New Year's Day – a shock result that allowed title rivals Manchester City to draw level with Blues at the top of the Premier League table on 46 points, having been eight points adrift of the west Londoners in November.

Chelsea had enjoyed a happy Christmas thanks to 2-0 wins at Stoke City and at home to West Ham United on Boxing Day, before things turned sour.

He was right to complain bitterly that Chelsea were denied a clear penalty when Cesc Fabregas was sliced down inside the box at Southampton, where the visitors had to settle for a 1-1 draw in their final game of 2014. It was a bad and costly mistake by referee Anthony Taylor, who rapidly compounded that blunder by booking the Spanish star for diving.

● By LWN reporter **Tony McDonald**
sport@londonweeklynews.co.uk

Where Mourinho got it wrong, though, was in his irrational claim afterwards that there is a conspiracy campaign among match officials against his team. His lengthy list of perceived injustices led to a rambling outburst about "a scandal" and how "people, pundits, commentators and coaches from other teams react to Chelsea in a way they don't react to other teams, and this put lots of pressure on referees."

The Fabregas fiasco at St Mary's evoked recent memories of incidents in which several Chelsea players – Costa, Willian and Gary Cahill – were all booked for dives in the home game against Hull, while Branislav Ivanovic prompted a scuffle with West Ham players when he collapsed to the turf far too easily after a slight tug from Andy Carroll in the derby.

Perhaps if the Portuguese did more to discourage his players from going to ground too easily, they would

gain the penalties he is convinced they deserve.

If dropping two points at Southampton upset him, Mourinho's mood became even darker than the north London night sky over Tottenham, where he blamed referee Phil Dowd for his lack of fitness and failure to award a penalty against Spurs' Jan Vertonghen for handball in the first half. It was hardly a nailed-on pen as the ball rolled against the arm of the fallen Belgian. And Mourinho would no doubt have been apologetic had it been given against his team.

Of course, what the dismayed Chelsea boss failed to mention in his undignified post-match media rant was Dowd's biggest error: his failure to show Cahill the red card he deserved for deliberately kicking Tottenham's Harry Kane in the back while the striker was on the ground near the touchline.

We have all seen Mourinho's attempts at reverse psychology to try and influence referees in giving decisions in favour of Chelsea, in much the same way Sir Alex Ferguson did to good effect for many years at Manchester United.

But it's not working for Jose these days and he needs



This week at STAMFORD BRIDGE

to change the record. Frankly, to blame a referee after your team had slumped to a shocking 5-3 defeat in the rare, tame manner in which Chelsea did on this occasion undermines the credibility of his claims.

It is the first time Chelsea have conceded four or more goals in a single league game under Mourinho, who has been on the wrong end of five goals only once before in his managerial career – when Barcelona outclassed his Real Madrid team, 5-0 at Camp Nou, back in November 2010.

Blaming officials for the shortcomings of players has become a routine response for many beaten managers but it doesn't have to be so. Instead of bleating about referees and their assistants, why don't Mourinho and his fellow Premier League bosses lead a strong campaign for the introduction of instant replay technology that would eradicate most, if not all, of the worst, most costly, decisions?

Instead of lambasting officials, help them to improve their decision-making in a fast-moving game in which players are shown to be guilty of cheating.

How long would it take for the man with the whistle to halt a game, nip across to the touchline and view an instant replay of the most contentious issues surrounding penalties, red card incidents and offside decisions that result in goals, or for a 'video match official' to do so? No longer than it now takes a beleaguered ref to restore law and order after being harangued by aggrieved players.

Give each manager, say, two chances to appeal a big decision per half. If their appeal is upheld by an instant TV replay, then they keep two appeals. But if the ref is proved correct the first time, then the manager loses one of his appeals.

This simple system has particularly benefited Test cricket and its umpires in respect of lbw verdicts – and it's time football followed suit.

Rugby, tennis and the major American sports have also embraced instant replays to aid its referees and umpires, so why isn't our No.1 national sport using it, too, beyond the largely irrelevant goal-line technology introduced at the start of last season?

Sky and BT Sport have countless cameras scattered all around top flight grounds, so accessing good pictures that could provide conclusive evidence is not the issue here. It matters not that the same degree of video replay technology on offer at Chelsea isn't available at, say, Crewe. Let's at least get the majority of the big decisions right in the Premier League and Championship, where the pursuit of coveted Champions League places and promotion and relegation issues have become massively important to clubs from a financial perspective.

The football media won't call for instant replays because it would negate their endless inquests into controversial decisions but top managers like Mourinho would sleep much easier at night if match officials were given the extra help they clearly need.



Focus on Craven Cottage

FULHAM LACK FIREPOWER

AS the 40th anniversary of Fulham's last FA Cup final appearance looms, the Whites will be kicking themselves for failing to progress to the fourth round at the first time of asking this year following Saturday's home goalless draw with Wolves.

"We got plenty of shots away but not many on target, which was disappointing," said Fulham manager Kit Symons. "A few of the players had good opportunities and something that we preach constantly is to go low and hard across the goal but we were hitting the side-netting or blazing over."

A swift counter-attack by the Whites presented them with a great chance to snatch the only goal late on when midfield anchor man Scott Parker played Siko Fofana through, only for the young Frenchman to blow his big chance.

With Wolves keeper Ikeme advancing to the edge of the area, Fofana had the relatively simple task of lobbing the ball over him and into the empty net from 22 yards. Instead, he misused his tame right-foot shot against the grateful keeper's gloves and let Wolves off the hook.

But Symons was not about to point the finger at the youngster's failure to seal Fulham's passage into the fourth round without the need for a replay at Molineux (date to be confirmed).

"He's a good young player who's come in and done really well for us," he stated, "and he's looking better and stronger and more confident each game."

"I thought he looked a real forward threat today but then maybe just lacked that extra little bit of composure when he got himself into some really good positions. But the most important thing first is that he's getting into those positions, and now we need him just to settle down and start taking them."

"It was probably a typical cup tie, a lot of blood and guts, a lot of endeavour. But it was probably lacking that a bit of quality, that little bit of craft and guile, for either team to score the winning goal."

"Some of our decision-making and the actual quality in the final third wasn't quite there," Symons added.

Lack of firepower has proved Fulham's undoing in recent games. With top scorer Hugo Rodallega perhaps looking in need of a rest, the

Whites have failed to score in any of their last three matches following the clinical 4-0 slaughter of Sheffield Wednesday at Craven Cottage on December 20. Successive 2-0 defeats, at league leaders Bournemouth and at home to Brighton, at the end of 2014 has seen Fulham slip back down to 17th place in the Championship.

Keeper Marcus Bettinelli was the home player who came out of the FA Cup tie with most credit.

"He was excellent," praised Symons. "He made a couple of really good saves at important times. He's been very, very good all season since I've taken over."

"I've been delighted with his development and the way he's conducted himself. He's an important part of our team and when we needed to call on him today he was there and he was ready."

Fulham suffered a blow just after the half-hour mark when Lasse Vigen Christensen had to be withdrawn due to a recurring hamstring strain.

It remains to be seen if the promising, young Dane will be fully recovered in time for Saturday's league visit to Cardiff City.